(d) its impact on the employees and the Unions' reaction to the proposed slash in the interest rate?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA) : (a) and (b) The rate of interest for the Employees' Provident Fund subscribers for the year 2002-03 was 9.5% per annum. The rate of interest for the current financial year has not been declared so far.

(c) The investments are being made by the Employees Provident Fund Organisation, in accordance with the investment pattern notified by the Central Government from time to time.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

UN Charter's approval for Military Action

*673. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that according to the UN Secretary-General's statement in Hague on the 10th March any military action outside the Council would not be in conformity with the UN Charter;

(b) if so, in what manner the UN Charter deals with such a situation if it actually happens; and

(c) Government's views in this regard and the diplomatic steps it visualises to avoid such a situation and for maintaining universal peace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) to (c) Speaking in the specific context of Iraq, which was an issue before the Security Council on March 10, the UN Secretary General said "If the US and others were to go outside the Council and take military action, it would not be in conformity with the Charter".

The Charter envisages use of force in case of self-defence or as authorised by the Security Council under Chapter VII.

The Government had expressed its sense of deep anguish at the resort to military action in Iraq, which in its view lacked justification and was avoidable. Government has been in contact with other Governments on a more effective role by the UN in avoiding such situations and in strengthening international peace and security.

Foodgrains in Central Pool

*674. SHRI MURLI DEORA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :